



Second Quarter Student forum Questions.

The questions below were submitted by students to the SRC for the 2nd quarter student forum. Though the forum was postponed the questions have been answered by the SRC. As the SRC, we appreciate and value the participation of the student body in this accountability process.

The questions are in normal font and words in italics are the answers provided by the particular office.

President

1. What help is the SRC providing so that students don't get left behind unnecessarily? Because some lecturers have very little to no sympathy over the fact that things have changed.
 - a. *The SRC has been front and centre in the laptop project. We have gone through great lengths to get the word out to students and have also directly submitted the details of students for consideration.*
 - b. *The SRC has also raised issues where we felt that inadequate consideration was given to students. This has resulted in the establishment of a Laptop Appeals Committee to afford students a second chance.*
 - c. *The SRC has also raised concerns that students have brought to our attention concerning the Connect portal. We engaged IT services regularly in this regard and also conveyed the request for Data that students have made. This has resulted in students having both the option of using the connect portal or data.*
 - d. *The SRC has also pushed for a second intake of data requests which is ongoing at the time that this response is being drafted.*
 - e. *The SRC has also liaised with Student Support to ensure that students are getting assistance in relation to taking care of their mental wellness. We encourage any students that have are battling in this regard.*





- f. *The SRC has also communicated measures in place to assist differently abled students.*
- g. *The SRC has also engaged the Executive to try and cover even more students which has resulted in telephonic tutoring being made available to students also.*
- h. *The SRC has also been engaging with lecturers on a daily basis to ensure that students are accommodated as far as possible. We encourage students facing difficulties in this regard to continue alert us to the module and the specific difficulties.*
2. The Minister of DHET recently announced a risk adjustment strategy for tertiary institutions which permits only a 3rd of the student population to return to campus, are students safe as they will return to campus? Have you gone to the campus (on the ground) to evaluate whether indeed the university comply with covid-19 safety measures?
- a. *The safety and wellbeing of our students is our priority during this time. The SRC is also represented on the Workplace Safety Committee. In all respects we ensure that the health and safety of students is the focal point. Yes, I am currently on the ground on a daily basis to ensure that the measures in place truly will ensure the safety of students. I urge all students that are around a UP campus to make use of the self-screening service on the HealthCheck application before entering campus and to complete it honestly. I can confirm that the University is complying with these measures.*
3. What measures has the University taken to ensure that data and laptops reach students who reside in remote areas that don't have street addresses such as rural areas and squad camps?
- a. *The University has made use of the South African Postal Service as its courier as this is the service with the widest reach. In instances where this reach is still insufficient, students in extreme situations have been incorporated into the 33% of students that are returning as far as possible.*





4. Under which level of the national lockdown will the students be allowed to return to their respective residence?

a. Students are allowed to return according to a phased in approach announced by the Minister that correlates with each level of the lockdown. Under level 3 it is 33% of student , Under level 2 this number increases to 66% and 100% of students will be allowed back should all restrictions be lifted.

5. Will the SRC elections as well as key committee, residence, faculty, day structure elections be held this year (2020), despite students not being on campus?

a. All options regarding elections are being considered. I can confirm that SRC substructures such as Key, Committees, Residences Commitees, Faculty and Day Houses will have their elections before SRC elections should SRC elections take place. The SRC has raised the point that an election can only be free and fair if all students have the option to vote. This point has been taken back for further discussion where options are being considered currently.

SRC Academics

1. How the SRC is addressing student academics now, given the state of COVID-19. We are first of all still paying full tuition despite not being able to receive full assistance.

In respect of the students still paying full tuition despite not being able to receive full assistance due to the pandemic. Management has told us that they will address student tuition in respect to student academics as soon as they have all the relevant information from the relevant parties. It has been tabled for discussion in statutory committees. Indications seem to be that the University is waiting for instruction from the DHET. DHET seems to





be waiting on the Finance Minister's adjustment. We have expressed the fact students cannot be expected to pay for services that are not received. Updates will be provided as we receive them.

2. My question to the panel is regarding practicals for undergraduate students who are under NAS faculty. Will the first- and second-year students be doing practicals once they're allowed to return to campus or it will only be lectures allowed? If they do have to do practicals for all their modules, what measures will be implemented to ensure safety?

The question in respect to the NAS faculty and whether practicals will be provided for undergraduate students such as first and second year students is that the priority right now is final years and postgrads. The restriction of 33% makes this be the case.

The departments will improvise and communicate with their students in due course. Unless students get adequate communication, it is safe to assume that what is currently underway is sufficient with regards to their program, As the pandemic may have a re-surge we can currently assume that the theoretical knowledge being acquired in summary is adequate at this point in time.

[SRC Study finance office](#)

1. What arrangements will be done for tuition and residence fee reduction?

On the 10th of April 2020; the SRC released a memorandum of concerns with online learning and one of these concerns addressed this particular issue of tuition and residence fee reduction. The executives responded to this stating that "the adjustment of fees is reliant on whether we will lose the academic year" of 2020 or not.





Therefore, a definite answer was not necessarily given to thoroughly address this particular issue. However, because I believe this is a pertinent issue which needs to be addressed more especially residence fees; because students should not be liable to pay for accommodation which they did not occupy for a specific duration; I have further brought up this issue with Prof. Koornhof – the executive director for Finance. And this is still in discussion. But through my office I have proposed that students in traditional residence should not be charged for the time which they were and are not in residence.

2. Currently NSFAS students receive monthly allowances, where are the monthly allowances derived, is it from meal cards or somewhere else?

If you are an NSFAS student who is placed under TuksRes, initially your living allowance would be directed towards the R14 400 on your meal allowance. However, NSFAS students in res expressed that this is unfair to still keep their allowance in the meal allowance even though they are currently not in res; so that meal allowance has been converted to R1400 monthly living allowance in the time being and it is deducted from the meal allowance on your student card.

3. If tuition and residence fees are indeed reduced will NSFAS students receive the negative balance of the reduced tuition and residence fees to their personal accounts (particularly final year students)?

I am uncertain of this but the Minister of Higher Education, Mr Blade Nzimade did express in a speech he made on the 30th of April 2020 that it would not be plausible for NSFAS to take in tuition refunds; so essentially the money might be credited to the institution.





4. Will the unused/untouched money of the meal cards since March be wired to the personal accounts of the students if indeed students will not return to campus for the rest of the year?

For self-funded students, up until you settle all your tuition fees, the money that is in the meal account is not yours per say. The meal account is on credit until you pay your entire fees. So because of this the money cannot be paid out into self-funded students' personal bank accounts; at this point it is only plausible for NSFAS students.

SRC Societies office

1. Recently you engaged in a WhatsApp texts war in a WhatsApp group chat you've established for society representatives. This has placed you and your leadership skills under scrutiny.

Can you take us into confidence and explain, on what grounds and why did you remove Jonas Thulare from the WhatsApp group chat to settle your political agenda?

Thank you for your question. Firstly, the use of the term 'Whatsapp war' is not an accurate reflection of the dialogue on the group. Mr Thulare was cautioned once for disrespectful address by David Kabwa on one occasion and me on the other. This was enough to remove Mr Thulare from the group.

